

# Special requirements and policies

Special requirements and policies apply to students in both health-related and teacher education courses.

These requirements relate to:

- clinical/internship placements undertaken as part of your course,
- proof of English language proficiency, and
- procedures for employment after you have completed the course.

Note that requirements and policies in these areas are subject to regular review.

## Health-related courses

### Criminal record checks

**Note:** The NSW Department of Health introduced changes to the procedure for processing criminal record checks effective from 1 June 2010. Students must obtain a complete information pack and forms from their educational institution.

NSW Health requires all students in health-related courses to undergo a National Criminal Record Check before they can undertake a clinical placement in NSW Health facilities.

- Students obtain (and pay the fee for) their own National Police Certificate, through a state or territory Police service or through the Australian Federal Police.
- Overseas students, in addition to obtaining an Australian National Police Certificate, must obtain a police certificate (with English translation) from their home country and any country they have resided in. If unable to obtain a police certificate, the student must complete a statutory declaration stating they have no pending, current or previous criminal charges or convictions in those countries. If the student has any criminal records, the statutory declaration must list the offences, the dates and any court outcomes.

If a student's National Police Certificate (and overseas police certificates/statutory declaration for overseas students) **shows no criminal history**, the student must present them to the Clinical Placement Co-ordinator/Facilitator and to the NSW Health facility before or at the start of their clinical placement. The National Police Certificate is valid for three years from the date of issue and the Overseas Police Certificates and Statutory Declarations are valid for the whole course.

If a student's National Police Certificate (or overseas police certificates/statutory declaration for overseas students) **shows a criminal record**, the student cannot use these documents for their clinical placement. The student must complete the NSW Health 'Risk Assessment form' available at [www.health.nsw.gov.au/resources/jobs/student\\_clearance/Appendix\\_3\\_S7\\_pdf.asp](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/resources/jobs/student_clearance/Appendix_3_S7_pdf.asp) and send it to the NSW Department of Health, who will review the student's criminal history and conduct a risk assessment. If the student is assessed as suitable for clinical placement, they will be issued with either a Clinical Placement Authority Card or a Conditional Letter, which must be presented before or at the start of each placement to the NSW Health facility instead of the National Police Certificate. A student given a Conditional Letter must disclose the conditions to the Clinical Placement Co-ordinator/Facilitator at their institution, who will liaise with the NSW Health facility before the clinical placement to determine if the conditions imposed on the student can be met by that facility. Clinical Placement Authority Cards and conditional letters have 'valid to' dates on them determined by the NSW Department of Health.

All students seeking placement in a NSW Health facility must sign the:

- *Student Undertaking* with their institution as part of their enrolment agreeing to notify NSW Health within seven days if they are charged or convicted of any criminal offences after the date of issue of their National Police Certificate or while completing their course. **Note:** if there are any further criminal charges or convictions, the student is not to attend any clinical placement pending a risk assessment by the NSW Department of Health.
- *Commission for Children and Young People Student Declaration* form as well as a form stating that they have read and understood the NSW Health Code of Conduct at the start of a placement with the NSW Public Health facility.

### Infectious diseases

Students who need to complete clinical training in the NSW hospital system will be subject to guidelines and procedures laid down for health workers by the NSW Department of Health, including guidelines on infectious diseases.

In the hospital system students are exposed to a large number and variety of individuals, and this may place you at risk of contracting one of these diseases.

If you have a communicable disease you may place your clients at risk. Therefore, you are required to be protected against a range of vaccine preventable infectious diseases and may be screened for tuberculosis.

Information about specified infectious diseases and the requirements of the NSW Health policy is at [www.health.nsw.gov.au/publichealth/immunisation/ohs](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/publichealth/immunisation/ohs)

**If you do not have the required documentary evidence of protection against the specified diseases, you will not be accepted for clinical placement in the**

### NSW health system and progress in your course will be affected.

Some health care workers (nurses, doctors, dentists, dental technicians, podiatrists and physiotherapists) also have regulated individual responsibility with regard to infection control. You need to familiarise yourself with these responsibilities.

Health care workers who are HIV antibody positive, hepatitis B e-antigen positive, hepatitis B DNA positive or hepatitis C PCR positive must not perform exposure-prone procedures. Infected people should seek expert medical advice on their infectious status and the extent to which this may limit their clinical practice.

Further information about the exposure-prone procedures and the requirements of the NSW Health policy is at: [www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2005/pd2005\\_162.html](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2005/pd2005_162.html)

### Nursing and midwifery courses: English language proficiency

You may have to provide proof of proficiency in English at one or two points in your pathway to becoming a nurse or midwife in Australia:

- 1 when you apply for admission to your course and/or
- 2 when you apply for registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia for the first time.

The tests/qualifications and results that are accepted at these two points are different. You must therefore read the requirements carefully.

#### 1 When you apply through UAC for admission to the course

If you have undertaken your studies in an overseas country, you may have to provide proof of proficiency in English.

You need to know that:

- institutions determine their own English language proficiency requirements
- you can find information about tests and qualifications that institutions accept as proof of English language proficiency in this Guide – read Table 5 English language proficiency on pages 101 - 107
- most institutions have many ways for you to provide proof of English language proficiency.

#### 2 When you apply for registration as a nurse or midwife

From 1 July 2010 practitioners applying for registration as a nurse or midwife for the first time in Australia are required to demonstrate English language proficiency as specified by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA).

You need to know that:

- the NMBA determines acceptable English language tests and results
- you can find a copy of the NMBA's English language skills registration standard at [www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards.aspx](http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards.aspx)
- the NMBA has three ways for you to provide proof of English language proficiency
- you can find useful FAQs and fact sheets at [www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/FAQ-and-Fact-Sheets.aspx](http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/FAQ-and-Fact-Sheets.aspx)

#### Changes to current standard

The current English language skills registration standard may change; any changes to the standard will include transitional arrangements. To access the latest information, visit the NMBA website at [www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards.aspx](http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards.aspx)

### Teacher education courses

#### Working with Children Check

The NSW Government is committed to providing a safe and caring environment for children. Under the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*, employers must implement what is referred to as the Working with Children Check. This Act also establishes employment screening requirements for child-related employment in NSW.

All teacher education students must complete a 'Working with Children Check - Applicant declaration and consent' form when undertaking practical training as part of an educational or vocational course in NSW government schools. By signing the declaration, a student is declaring that they have not been convicted of any prohibited or registrable offence that would preclude them from working in child-related employment in NSW, and consenting to the Commission for Children and Young People checking their relevant criminal records to verify their statement. Prohibited persons will not be able to undertake practical course requirements in NSW schools. It is an offence for a prohibited person to apply for, attempt to obtain, undertake or remain in child-related employment. It is also an offence to make a false declaration.

Teacher education students seeking to undertake an internship or associate teacher program must complete a 'Working with Children Check - Applicant declaration and consent' form and be screened before they begin their internship in schools. The employment screening process involves a National

Check including a check for relevant criminal records, relevant apprehended violence orders, and relevant employment proceedings and a risk estimate where a relevant record is found. Employment screening is also conducted for those seeking to work in paid child-related employment in the Department.

For more details contact the course co-ordinator/s at the institutions.

### **Subject content requirements for teachers**

When seeking admission to a graduate entry initial teacher education program you must meet the NSW Institute of Teachers' subject content requirements either before admission or before graduation.

The institutions determine if you meet the Institute's subject content requirements in your undergraduate and postgraduate degree/s.

#### **English and Mathematics requirements for teachers**

##### **Primary teachers in NSW schools**

Teacher education students seeking employment as primary teachers in NSW schools must have achieved a Higher School Certificate minimum Band 4 in English (Advanced), English (Standard) or English as a Second Language, and Band 4 in General Mathematics, or completion of Mathematics (2 unit).

Where you don't meet these entry requirements, institutions may offer concurrent study or appropriate bridging units and/or require satisfactory performance in approved tests in literacy and numeracy before graduation. For further details contact the course co-ordinator/s at the institutions and read institutions' course descriptions in Part 2.

##### **Secondary teachers in NSW schools**

Teacher education students seeking employment as secondary teachers in NSW schools must have achieved a Higher School Certificate minimum Band 4 in English (Advanced), English (Standard) or English as a Second Language.

Where you do not meet these entry requirements, institutions may offer concurrent study or appropriate bridging units and/or require satisfactory performance in an approved test in literacy before graduation. For further details contact the course co-ordinator/s at the institutions and read institutions' course descriptions in Part 2.